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Thesis

JUDIT HORTOVÁNYI
COMPARATIVE ANALYSES OF ZINGARO/ROMANI AND
NON- ROMANI ADOLESCENT'S 5-SYMBOLS ART TASK SERIES



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1. The Questions of the Research

My research field is the application of projective drawings in pedagogical practice, so the first question is how we can use projective art tasks in the school. I am going to elaborate on visual representation as a tool of self-expression with the help of the theoretical background of the 5-symbols art task series developed by myself. Pictures – in this case the pupil's drawings – are natural bearers of meanings and are able to convey more complex content than words can. (Kristof Nyiri, *Kép és idő [Zeit und Bild]*, 2011) During the application of this art task series I consider visual representation as a channel of communication. The system of signs used for socializing and communication by humans consists not only of verbal but nonverbal components too. (Istvan Nagy, *21. század és nevelés [21st Century and Education]*, 2002) The second main area in my research is to reveal the self-knowledge and self-expression concept of the Visual Education. Visual language as a channel of communication can be used in pedagogical practice particularly during adolescence, when symbolic picture language can become an important tool for self-expression. 'In the teenage years, representation often shifts from simple depiction to expression hidden behind symbols'. (Andrea Karpati, *A kamaszok vizuális nyelve [The Visual Language of Adolescents]*, 2005) At the time of sensitivity to self-knowledge it is extremely important for adolescents to deal with themselves, which could be promoted by visual education as well.

I made my research with Zingaro/Romani and non-Romani adolescents. Another question of my research is the position of Zingaro/Romani students in the primary schools. I suppose that projective drawings can very well be used in the case of helping problematic, underprivileged children. Self-expression, depictions of the inner reality of the individual are given a great emphasis when dealing with ethnic minority groups full of tensions, such as Zingaro/Romani adolescents. Visual symbols serve a better understanding and can be a new means of establishing relations. In my opinion, a deeper knowledge of the world of thought of Zingaro/Romani adolescents can help their teachers and classmates accept them and build a relationship. The individual can reveal himself and his emotions and desires through symbols so profoundly that it is impossible or he would not dare to do in other ways. On the other hand, it helps Zingaro/Romani students express themselves and release tension and emotions. I suppose that drawing symbols raises the degree of consciousness as well as contributes to a closer relationship between the community and the individual by making the inner world clearer. In this way drawing symbols does not only improve the relationship between students but between the teacher and the student as well through a more complete and subtler understanding.

2. The 5-Symbols Art Task series

The 5-symbols task is a projective art task series tailored for pedagogical practice developed by myself. The instruction – the projective calling stimulus of the task series – in this case is the 5 given symbols (the ship, the house, the tree, the heart and an optional symbol), which are embedded in the frame story of an imaginary journey. In this story we imagine taking a trip on our own ship. We have to plan any kind of boat, this is the first symbol. Unfortunately we suffer a shipwreck and are stranded on an island. There is a house - this is the second symbol of the Task. In the middle of the island there is a cave, and in the depth of the cave there are two magical mirrors. One of them shows us a picture about our hearts, another shows an optional symbol about ourselves. The heart and the optional sign are the third and the fourth symbols. At last we get out of the cave and catch a glimpse of a tree. The tree is the last symbol. We fall asleep under the tree and the rescue team finds us there.

Joining the sociological concept of interpreting the symbols I see the symbols as a reflection, a concentrated expression of the inner self. (Ágnes Kapitány and Gábor Kapitány, 2002, pp. 7–8.) In that sense visual symbols are the means of understanding reality, getting to know ourselves and the other person. With the help of these drawings, through the depiction of the symbols students share their personal experience, their inner world with the community. Besides their everyday meaning, symbols always have a specific connotation. (Jung, 1964) Alternating freely between the wide range of meanings, the drawing person can express contents that are forbidden in verbal form or contents they are ashamed of (e.g. anxiety, aggression, inferiority complex, etc.). The everyday meaning of the symbols makes the drawing person feel secure, while the hidden meaning allows them to express themselves. This double character – the opportunity of hiding and revealing – may have a significant role with students belonging to minority groups in an environment having real or perceived preconceptions (e.g. Zingaro/Romani students).

The five symbols are *the ship, the house, the tree, the heart and an optional symbol*. Two of them – the house and the tree – are used in therapeutic practice. The first monograph about the Tree test (Baum test) was written by Koch in 1949, but Bolander, who supplemented and improved the procedure in many respects, significantly contributed to the interpretation of tree drawings. The above mentioned authors and others dealing with tree drawings emphasise the importance of tree as an archetypal symbol. According to some authors (Buck, Hammer), the drawing of a tree offers the deepest expression of personality

in the house-tree-man test, since here we have the biggest number of unconscious elements besides conscious ones (Vass, 2007, p.69).

The analysis of house drawings was first noted down by Buck in the house-tree-man test. The house symbolizes the whole personality, that is, the living place, the home and the relationships within the family (Uerner) (Vass, 2007, p.69).

The ship plays an important part in a lot of mythological and religious teachings as well as in the history of our civilization, for example the mythical boats in Egypt; the well-known stories from ancient Greece is the journey of Odysseus; Kharon's boat is the means of transmission between the world of the living and the dead; in the Old Testament Noah's ark is the sign of God's covenant, by which He saves mankind from the deluge (Book of Genesis 7,13 – 8,22) or in the New Testament the Catholic Church identifies itself with the image of the ship. The interest and romantic attraction towards ships and sailing can be seen in the choice of topic in today's blockbusters, like the films Titanic and The Pirates of the Caribbean. Some Hungarian sayings and idioms also contain words about ships or sailing as a symbol of human life, for example 'Follow the river and you'll get to the sea', or 'a stranded relationship' or 'we are rowing the same boat', etc.

In my drawing task the ship represents alienation from the outside world, from the ordinary days, since the adolescents under examination consider the ship a special means of transport. It prepares the sailing into inner waters, the journey into the realm of imagination, into ourselves. I suppose that the equipment, the size, the secure or unsecure visualisation of the ship reflect the inner thoughts a child has about himself. It shows what background, equipment and sense of security he has when setting out on a 'voyage' of life. One of the research tasks is to support this hypothesis, that is, to operationalise and show whether the visual representation and artistic features of the ship correlate with the self-assessment of the person under examination, the attributes of his self-image.

The underlying content of **the heart** is represented very expressively by a lot of idiomatic phrases in the Hungarian language, which describe the heart as a state of mind, as a feature of the human character. (The following examples all contain the word 'heart' in Hungarian: soft-hearted, hard-hearted, heartless, my heart leapt for joy, break one's heart, my heart was aflame, heart-gripping, hide a secret in one's heart, have a heart of gold, etc.) The heart as the symbol of love in Hungarian folk art is analysed by Mihály Hoppál (Hoppál, 1990).

Optional symbols are often animal figures or plants and objects whose interpretation has a lot of points of reference to drawing tests already worked out, e.g. enchanted and kinetic

family drawings. The special symbolism of animals, most elaborated in the case of drawings of animal families, also contributes to the interpretation.

The visual expression of adolescents is usually analysed in a psychotherapeutic context. In these cases the aim is to reveal the abilities or some problems, to diagnose some disorder through the outcrop of the unconscious. However, the drawings can be considered as a representation of the psychic condition without any disorder, too. The aim in pedagogical context is to develop a harmonic personality. A projective drawing is an ability to reflect on oneself – it focuses on self-expression. The drawings ensure closer connection between the individual world and community. Drawing appears as the language of communication between teacher and student or also among a group of students. Projective drawings make the personal inner world more understandable, they help demolish stereotypes. Also, projective drawings reveal the personal and social competence (e.g. self-confidence, self-respect, ambition, ethos, self-reflection, apperception, etc.).

With the instrumentality of this art task series I reveal the typical visual characteristics of Zingaro/Romani and non-Romani adolescents, as a group.

3. The theoretical background

Inasmuch as the 5-symbols Art Task Series is based on my own concept, it is very important to reveal the pedagogical and theoretical context. I reveal the interdigitations with the tendencies of visual education in Hungary. First I introduce the past and the present, mainly relieve the new paradigm in this field. This paradigm says that we need to extend the content of Visual Education. There are four new segments of visual education, these are visual language, fine arts, visual communication, subjects and environment. The 5-symbols Art Task series is connected with the part of visual communication, accordingly, the drawing in this case is a tool of nonverbal communication.

I review the new aspects of the measurement and assessment system of the paradigm shift, which also raises the question of assessing projective drawings from a pedagogical point of view (Kárpáti and Gaul 2011, Pataky 2009, Bodóczy 2001, Kiss 2011). Based on these guidelines I make a suggestion for the potential pedagogical evaluation criteria of the 5-symbols Art Task Series. During the evaluation I focus on individual expressivity and the degree of personal involvement, the manifestation of message, expression and communication through visual representation as well as on the creativity and imagination in expressing the inner content.

In this study I survey the most considerable Hungarian publications that deal with the visuality of Zingaro/Romani people in a narrow or wider sense of the word, with drawings of

Zingaro/Romani children and their visual education. This study presents examples of the integration of Zingaro/Romani visual arts into the curriculum, some alternative school experiments, and some extraordinary teachers who work on the catching up of the underprivileged children with the help of visual education. (Deszpot 2010, Rajnai 2010, Ritók Nóra 2008, Horváth H. 1999, Ribó Pongrácz Éva 2001). I also describe the scientific researches that used drawing analysis as a means of examination in their inquiry of Zingaro/Romani people. (Kárpáti, Antal, 1999, Gerő, Csanádi, Ladányi, 2006, Kende, Illés 2011)

4. Hypotheses and the research procedure

After examining the embedding into theory context and the pedagogical use of the projective 5-symbols Art Task Series I make the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 refers to the new art task series and its validity. I assume that the *5-symbols Art Task Series is suitable for expressing the emotions and thoughts of the students*. To prove this, I compare the results of the analysis of the drawings with the result of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) by Goodman, which can screen the typical behaviour of children aged 4-16 (in. Gerevich, Bácskai, 2012). *According to my hypothesis there is a significant correlation between the results of the two analytical methods.*

Hypothesis 2 refers to the *characteristics of the drawings of Zingaro/Romani students*. Joining the previous theories and research results, I collate the results of the analysis of the 5-symbols Art Task Series of Zingaro/Romani adolescents with the findings of the 1999 analysis by Andrea Kárpáti and Judit Antal, which lists the stylistic elements used by talented Zingaro/Romani children. (Kárpáti, Antal, 1999). *According to my hypothesis there is no significant difference between the analysed drawings of Zingaro/Romani and non-Zingaro/Romani students regarding the use of colours, depiction of space, style of depiction and composition.*

Hypothesis 3 and 4 also refer to the characteristics of the drawings of Zingaro/Romani students. *In my 3rd hypothesis I assume that the contextual and formal characteristics of the drawings within the analysed sample do not differ according to ethnic origin, that is, there is no significant difference between the drawings of the two groups of students - Zingaro/Romani and non-Zingaro/Romani students - regarding their ethnic origin.*

According to my hypothesis I assume that there is correlation between the contextual and formal characteristics of the drawings with the social background. I hypothesize that there are more drawings indicating a problem among the drawings of students from an inferior

social status whereas the drawings made by students from a higher social class mirror a problem-free state.

5. Sampling and the applied methods

I made my research with 60 Zingaro/Romani and 60 non-Romani students, altogether involving 120 students from year 8. The group under examination (Zingaro/Romani students) and the control group (non-Romani students) are involved according to school year and gender. The schools that I investigated are situated in the capital city (Districts VIII, IX and XXI), in towns near the capital (Vác and Nagymaros) and in Pécs (two schools). Sampling is not representative, so the results of my research are not of a general nature neither regarding the features of drawing nor the content that the Zingaro/Romani students. However, the approach represented in my research can in general contribute to a new and less biased attitude towards Zingaro/Romani students.

The most important tool of my research is the *5-symbols projective art task series* developed by myself. Encoding the drawings is based on the criteria drafted for my research, during which I follow the principles of the formal and structural analysis of drawings formulated by Zoltán Vass. (Vass, 2006) Among the aspects of the analysis, the formal elements of drawings are evaluated by studying *the relative size and layout on the sheet, the quality of the line, the use of colours* as well as *elaboration and details*. Contextual elements can be examined through *emotions and individual expressiveness*, where I also take into consideration the meaning behind each symbol. For the possible psychological meanings and their reasons see the publications of Zoltán Vass. (Vass, 2006, 2007, 2011)

The aspects of the analysis are complemented with the knowledge about the whole process of the drawing, the observation of behaviour during the test and the consideration of the conversation about the drawings. The *semi-structured interview*, which was conducted in the form of a personal talk, helps to reveal the self-conception of the drawer. This talk was about the drawing and the symbols depicted on them. This personal questioning was occasionally supplemented by a spontaneous group discussion during or after drawing the pictures.

To establish the *social background* I compiled a simplified *form*, taking into account the data protection legislation in force, which was completed by the students themselves. Social background is consolidated data based on the *number of siblings, education and the unemployment of parents*. I assumed a lower social background when the education was lower, the parents were unemployed and there was a higher number of siblings.

The *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ) was developed by Robert Goodman in 1994 to screen the typical behaviour and psychopathological symptoms of children aged 4-16. The questionnaire includes five subscales, each of which can be interpreted separately. The first four subscales are Emotional symptoms, Conduct problems, Hyperactivity and Peer relationship problems; their scores give the Total score of Difficulties. The fifth subscale screens the Prosocial behaviour, or the strength of social competence. I use the results of SDQ to assure or reject the results of the analysis of the 5-symbols projective art task series.

6. The most important results and the possible way forward

To check my first hypothesis I did nonlinear regression analysis (Generalized nonlinear model), so I examined the correlation between the results of the analysis of drawings and the subscales of Goodman's questionnaire. After calculating the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient it is obvious that the total scores of the drawings have a significant correlation with all the categories of the questionnaire. *Thus my first hypothesis is considered to be justified, that is, the 5-symbols art task series is suitable for reflecting the emotions, thoughts and self-image of the drawing person genuinely.*

When testing the first hypothesis I did a principal component analysis on the aspects of the analysis of drawings, which gave two scores. Based on this, one of the components includes the following aspects: *colour, line, elaboration, emotions and aggression*. They are *elements of affective effects*, determining the atmosphere of the pictorial expression and in some cases – *having a symbolic meaning*, so I call this principal component *Emotional Expression*. The other principal element includes two of the aspects of the analysis of drawings: *size and layout on the sheet*. The composition and size of the drawing can be considered as the *cognitive dimension* of the drawing, in case these two components reflect the thoughts of the drawing person about themselves. The size of the picture may be associated with several psychological factors. On the one hand, on a child's drawing it can indicate the importance of the motif whereas on the drawings of adolescents or adults it is most often related to self-esteem. (Vass, 2006, pp.138.) The position/layout of the drawing on the sheet has similar characteristics, so I named the second principal component *Self-esteem*. Having done the principal component analysis I found that the order of the drawings as a variant does not have any correlation with either of the principal components. Thus the given symbols (the ship, the house, the tree, the heart and an optional symbol) are equally suitable for self-expression and communication of feelings and thoughts, without any distinction.

When I was testing my second hypothesis, I checked if the features established by Andrea Kárpáti and Judit Antall, regarding the visual expression of talented Hungarian and talented Zingaro/Romani children can be seen on the samples examined by me. (Kárpáti, Antal, 1999) On the basis of the results of the independent samples *t*-test I find a slight difference between the characteristic features of the drawings of Zingaro/Romani and those of non-Zingaro/Romani students in the sample regarding only the *depiction of space*. *Therefore I consider my second hypothesis justified, since in general it can be stated that there is no contextual and formal difference between the characteristic features of the drawings of Zingaro/Romani and those of non-Zingaro/Romani students in the sample examined by me.*

My third and fourth hypothesis regard the question if there is a correlation between the results of the analysis of drawings of the 5-symbols art task series and the origin (that is, if the student in the test is of Zingaro/Romani or non-Romani origin) and the background of the person drawing the picture. After doing the Mann – Whitney tests I had the result that concerning the total score of the analysis of drawings, there is no significant difference between the drawings of Zingaro/Romani and those of non-Romani students in the sample. However, considering the aspects of 'elaboration' and 'expressiveness', there is a significant difference between the drawings of Zingaro/Romani and those of non-Romani students. To reveal this further examination is needed. *I consider the third hypothesis justified, since there is no significant difference between the groups of different origin concerning the total score of the analysis of drawings.* Thus the Zingaro/Romani origin is not connected with the stylistic features of visual depiction, and also, the groups distinguished by the origin do not have common features of their visual depiction.

However, there is a significant difference concerning the artistic features between the drawings of students with a different social background, with a lower or higher socio-economic status. Thus *I consider my fourth hypothesis justified, that is, artistic features are in connection with social background.* The results of my third and fourth hypothesis seem to affirm the sociologic approach to the educational situation of Zingaro/Romani children, so the use of the 5-symbols art task may facilitate the change of attitude in the pedagogical work with Zingaro/Romani students.

On the basis of my analysis it is proved that the 5-symbols projective art task series can be applied effectively in the frames of education, used with a lot of benefits in various fields of pedagogical work. The possible fields of application are the following:

- It facilitates cooperation and cohesion within the school.
- It can be a tool to create the climate of trust between teachers and students.

- It is a pedagogical tool that can be used in many ways (e.g. art lesson, lesson with the class teacher, integration of the outermost students, reveal the problems of students who are difficult to handle, understanding conflicts, contact with parents).
- Deliberate use of the functions of freehand drawing to promote self-knowledge and self-communication.
- 5-symbols art task series may be suitable for possible cooperation with other experts in the school (e.g. school psychologist, family advisor, child protection expert, teacher for pupils with learning difficulties, etc.)

In my study drawing as a way of communication also worked well with Zingaro/Romani students who live in an environment full of supposed or real prejudice. Conveying their thoughts and feelings frankly, the 5-symbols art task series may contribute to a better, unbiased knowledge and understanding of Zingaro/Romani students and by this to creating tolerance.

A further research project should be the analysis of a nationally representative sample. Involving other teachers in the test of the task series would allow to determine success as one linked to a person. Also, this research would make it possible to reveal the necessary teacher's competences for the efficient use of the 5-symbols art task series. I would demonstrate the effectiveness of the 5-symbols art task series with further research, for example I would empirically measure the state of social and personal competences before and after drawing and prove that the task series has an effect on the competences. By further analysing the existing data base, I would be able to explore the feelings and thoughts of Zingaro/Romani students more thoroughly. Also, I aim to further analyse the drawings already in the sample by exploring case studies where the formal and contextual features definitely indicate a problem when the questionnaire is in the normal, problem-free range. Developing detailed case studies, exploring thoroughly the students' background and considering the possible reasons for the deflection may focus the attention to important issues such as the different character of verbal (interviewing by questionnaire) and non-verbal expression (projective drawing) as well as the efficiency and options for further application of projective drawing as a means of communication.

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